Mahaprabhu Shri Vallabhacharya

The birth and death of ordinary human beings take place to avail the fruits of [1]sinful and virtuous actions committed in their earlier births. But the birth and death of great men do not occur because of such ordinary reasons. Just as a king may go out from his royal palace on some special purpose and comes to his palace by his own will. Similarly, the birth and death of great persons take place by their own will on special commandment of Bhagavan. They incarnate on the earth to perform some special deeds and when their work is over they go back to their own abode.

Manifestation at the behest of Bhagavan:

In the age of Kali, all the scriptural paths of self-upliftment had been corrupted because of hypocritical beliefs. Divine Pushti beings were experiencing affliction and agitation as they did not know any path to be closer with the Supreme Being Shri Krishna. Bhagavan Shri Krishna discerned this and so He ordained Shri Vallabhacharya to incarnate on the earth for uplifting divine beings. Bhagavan entrusted three works to Shri Vallabhacharya.

1. To uplift the divine Pushti beings by propounding the devotional path of Pushti
2. To explain the meaning of Bhagavat which is the base of the devotional path of Pushti, and
3. To proclaim the true purport of the scriptural paths of Action and Knowledge that lead to liberation.

On receiving Bhagavan's commandment Shri Vallabhacharya incarnated in the family of a learned, virtuous Brahmana devotee of Shri Krishna of south Bharat. In "Shri Vallabhashtakam' hymn Shri Vitthalanathaji shows what kind of situation would have been created if Shri Vallabhacharya had not manifested.

> O Mahaprabhu! If you had not graced the earth by your manifestation, Pushti beings, though born as [2]divine beings, would not have obtained Bhagavan Shri Krishna. And thus, this creation of Pushti beings would have been ruined in the absence of the Path of Shri Krishna's worship. Not only this, Pushti beings wouldn't have been able to see the true path of devotion. Because, they might have followed [3]paths of pretence that have been prevailed by the various incarnations of the god Shiva.

Childhood:

Shri Vallabhacharya was born in the forest named: 4Camparanya somewhere in India in V.S. 1535 (A.D.1478) during the travel of his parents from Kasi to their native place. His father Shri Lakshmanabhatta sent him to learned Pundits for education. He showed his extraordinary genius by completing study of all religious scriptures like Veda, Purana, Smrti, Tantra etc.; and various philosophies like Sankhya, Yoga, Nyaya, Mimamsa, Jaina, Bauddha etc., at the age of only eight years. At the age of ten, he defeated in the debate at Shri Jagannathapuri all the learned Acaryas of Shankaracarya's doctrine of Maya. In this very assembly at the royal court the king pleaded four questions to be answered by the Pundits and Acharyas. The questions were:

1. Which Scripture is the best of all scriptures?
2. Which deity is the best of all deities?

3. Which Mantra is the best of all Mantras?
4. Which duty is the best of all duties?

Many learned Pundits and Acaryas gave different answers to these questions but the king was not satisfied with them. At last, at the hint of Shri Vallabhacharya, all four questions were unanimously placed before Lord Shri Jagannatha (Shri Krishna) by Shri Vallabhacharya. Alongwith this, a blank paper, an inkpot and a pen were placed in front of the Lord Jagannatha. The doors of the temple were closed. When the doors were opened, the piece of paper with a verse answering all the four questions written on it was found. The verse was:

Ekam shastram devakiputragitam
Eko devo devakiputra eva;
Mantropyekas tasya namani yani,
Karmopyekam tasya devasy seva.

Meaning: Gita sung by Shri Krishna, son of Devaki, is the best scripture. Shri Krishna, son of Devaki, is the best deity. Names of Shri Krishna are the best Mantra. Service of Shri Krishna is the best duty.

Bharat wise tour:

In the assembly-hall of king Bhagavan Himself supported the doctrines propounded by Shri Vallabhacharya by the abovementioned verse. Considering it as the ordainment of Bhagavan, Shri Vallabhacharya went on Bharat wise tour to publicize those doctrines. Three times barefooted Shri Vallabhacharya went on tour throughout Bharat. During it he had debated with the great learned Pundits and Acaryas on the true meaning of scriptures and competently established the theory of Shuddhadvaita-Brahmavada and the devotional path of Pushti. He led towards Sanatana-Hindu-Dharma the people who were flung far from it and got converted by the terrorism of cruel converter Mogul intruders from the north-west of Bharat. On the day of Pavitra-ekadashi, Shri Vallabhacharya obtained Brahma-sambandha-mantra from Bhagavan Shri Krishna. On obtaining this Diksha-mantra he brought in order the system of initiation and the spiritual course for the disciples.

The Renouncement

In old time kings took it as their fortune in doing honour to the learned. Hence, they arranged for scriptural-debate inviting the learned to solve difficult problems. The learned man who was able to prove the worth of his doctrine was honoured with ceremonies like KanakabhishAeka, Rajatabhisheka etc. Shri Vallabhacharya, too, would participate in such scriptural-debates and establish his doctrine. As a result of this, kings would honour him with Kanakabhisheka etc. and dedicate to him with gold-coins, elephants, horses, gold and silver utensils etc. as gifts. But accumulation of money spoils the mind and one is not able to apply it into Bhagavan. Again, it is said in the scriptures that the wealth received from a king is somewhat more harmful. With this thought in mind, Shri Vallabhacharya would give away all such wealth in donation to Brahmans! For this reason he has been praised in Sarvottama-Stotra as "Mahodara-caritravan". This means: One having extremely generous character.

Simplicity:

The life of Shri Vallabhacharya was extremely simple even though many of his disciples were kings and prosperous persons. He used to wear only 'Dhoti' and 'Uparana', travel on foot and prepare offerings by himself. During tour he would stay in a lonely place at the outskirts of a village. He would give instruction to his disciples not to let anybody in the village know about his arrival as he had firm faith that those who were divine beings would come to him on their own accord. Attracted by his spiritual power and great knowledge many faithful people would come to him and brought for him valuable presents and gifts. But he would accept presents and gifts from none but his own disciples.

Love for Solitude:

According to the devotional course of Pushti-Bhakti-Sect the worship of Bhagavan must be performed in solitude at one's own home. Hence, after the tours were over, he constructed a small hut and settled down in a small village of Adel near Prayag permanently along with the members of his family and some people of his caste. He lived his life with whatever he received, without asking, from his disciples.

Scholarship:

Once a Brahmana well-versed in Veda came to Shri Vallabhacharya to test his expertise in Veda. He uttered 100 Mantras of Veda one by one before Shri Vallabhacharya. Shri Vallabhacharya uttered the very same Mantras in reverse order and removed his pride.

Once Shri Vallabhacharya came to Kashi. Throughout Bharat he was famous for his learning. Hence, a number of Pundits started coming for the discussion. On account of this he felt discomfort in performing the worship of Bhagavan, in Vaidic deeds and in preaching his disciples. Hence, he wrote the work of 'Patravalambanam' and got it stuck to the wall of the temple of Vishveshvara Mahadeva in Kashi, alongwith an instruction that those who had any question left unsolved even after reading this work might come to him for discussion. Because of this work there was abatement in coming and going of Pundits.

The Ideal Guru:

An expert jeweller buys a jewel by putting it to a touchstone. Similarly, a Guru does not make anybody his disciple, without taking test. Bhagavan had ordained Shri Vallabhacharya to reveal the path of Pushti-Bhakti for the upliftment of only Pushti-Beings. Hence, the devotional path of Pushti is meant only for the Pushti-Beings, it is not the religion for the people of the whole universe. Shri Vallabhacharya would grant initiation only after taking a test of the candidate so that a non-Pushti being may not enter into this Path. After granting initiation Shri Vallabhacharya did not leave any of his disciple on his fortune. He would stay at his home and teach him everything until he has proper knowledge of the doctrines and knowledge of the course of the path of Pushti-devotion. If any person came to his place for receiving initiation he would welcome him at his place and teach him everything about the doctrines and method of worship etc.

Some disciples stayed with Shri Vallabhacharya for lifetime. He would keep a watch on them so that they might not blaspheme others or might not enter into discussion unrelated to Bhagavan. He would go to see his disciples regularly twice or thrice at night. His character lets us know that a Guru should be as cautious for his disciples as a mother is worried every moment for the well-being of her little innocent child.

Composition of Works:

Bhagavan incarnated on the earth and uplifted the divine beings and after that Shri Vedavyas (incarnation of the knowledge of Bhagavan) composed Bhagavat so that the divine beings might be uplifted when the Bhagavan's incarnation is not present on earth. Similarly, Shri Vallabhacharya composed various works so as to show Pushti-Beings the path of devotion and to enable them to follow the devotional path of Pushti without any difficulty in his absence. The chief works of Shri Vallabhacharya are:

Anubhashya on [5]Brhamasutra(Incomplete)
Bhashya on [6]Jaimini Sutra (Incomplete)
Bhashya on Gayatri
Purvamimamsa-Bhashya-Karika
'Subodhini' a commentary on Bhagavat Purana (Incomplete)
'Sukshmatika' a commentary on Bhagavat Purana (Incomplete)
Bhagavat Dashama-skandha Anukramanika
Patravalambanam
Shiksha-shlokah
TATVARTHADIPNIBANDHA

1.Shastrartha-prakaranam
2.Sarvanirnaya-prakaranam
3.Bhagavatartha-prakaranam

SODAShAGRANTHA

1.Yamunashtakam
2.Balabodha
3.Siddhantamuktavali
4.Pushti-pravah-maryada-bheda
5.Siddhanta-rahasya
6.Navaratnam
7.Antahkarana-prabodha
8.Viveka-dhairyas^Araya
9.Krishnas^Araya
10.Catuhs^Aloki
11.Bhaktivardhini
12.Jalabheda
13.Pan^Ucapadyani
14.Sannyasa-nirnaya
15.Nirodhalakshanam
16.Sevafalam

STOTRA:

-Madhurashtakam
-Parivrdhashtakam,
-Shri Krishnashtakam,
-SriGirirajadharyashtam,
-Premamrtam
-Shri Gopijanavallabhashtakam etc.

-Shri Purushottama-nama-sahasrm (One thousand names of Shri Krishna from Bhagavat Purana)

-Trividhalila-namavali

Back to Abode:

One of purposes of Shri Vallabhacharya's incarnation was to enlighten the true meaning of Bhagavat-Purana. However, to write a commentary on Bhagavat, extended into 18000 verses, and that too during constant travel was a very difficult task. Hence, the work of writing commentary was going on in a slow process. During this period Shri Vallabhacharya received ordainment from Bhagavan to return to his abode. Eventhough the mission was not fully accomplished. Shri Vallabhacharya left the work of writing the commentary on Bhagavat thinking that whatever work has been done was enough for the beings of the age of Kali. He renounced the life of a householder and accepted the stage of Sannyasa. He dwelt on the bank of the Ganga in Kashi without taking water and food. At the age of 52 on the day of Rathayatra in V.S. 1587 he entered the Ganga and disappeared from this world.

Only this much can be said about so illustrious man like Shri Vallabhacharya.

Shri-mad-vallabha-namdheya-sadrsho bhavi na bhutostyapi

Meaning: There hadn't been, there hasn't been nor will there be one like Shri Vallabhacharya.

"In this dire times no one except Shri Vallabhacharya is there to uplift me" until such faith is awakened in the disciples of the Pushti-Bhakti-Sect and until they become ready to carry out the doctrines of Shri Vallabhacharya, everything is utterly vain no matter whether they may have entered into this path.

1. As the fruit of sinful action drags the human soul into the vicious-circle of birth and death, the fruit of virtuous action, too, does the similar work. Therefore, both are regarded as bondage for the human soul. In other words, the sinful action is considered as an iron chain, whereas the virtuous action is considered as a golden chain. Sinful action=Papa-Karma. Virtuous action=Punya-Karma.
2. Those beings whom Bhagavan grants devotion or liberation and decides to uplift are called divine beings.
3. How can creation go on if all beings obtain liberation by following good Paths? Hence, Bhagavan commanded Shiva to spread paths of pretence so that demoniacal beings may be tempted to tread on their path and may not obtain salvation.
4. The village originally named 'Champazar' in the state of Madhaypradesha, India near city Raypur but wellknown by the name: 'Champaranya' is presently said to be the birth place of Shri Vallabhacharya. However, according to some people of the sect original birthplace of Shri Vallabhacharya is yet to be found. Because, no historical evidences that can prove Champazar as the birthplace of Shri Vallabhacharya are available or shown by the concerned people. For example, neither the city Cauda nor the river Bhimarathi is found near Champazar presently, so called birth-place of Shri Vallabhacharya. Whereas, learned Acarya Shri Dvarakeshaji and Shri Vitthalanatha Bhatta have clearly mentioned in their historical work 'Mulapurusha' and

'Sampradayakalpadrum' respectively that the birthplace of Shri Vallabhacharya is the forest 'Champaranya' situated near city Chauda and river Bhimarathi.

5. Brahma-sutra: The aphoristic work composed by Shri Vedavyasa to explain the difficult portion of Vedanta/Upanishad narrating the nature and relationship of Brahma, the universe, beings etc.
6. Mimamsa-sutra: The aphoristic work composed by sage Jaimini to explain difficult portion of Veda narrating sacrifices, actions, the fruit of actions, Mantra, etc.

Shri Gopinatha-prabhucaran

Of the two sons Shri Gopinaathaji was the elder son of Shri Vallabhacarya. He was born at Adel on 12th dark half of the month Asvin V.S. 1567 (A.D. 1511). His love for the worship of Bhagavan is quite well-known. Since he was trained under the guidance of Shri Vallabhacharya himself there remains nothing to say about his scholarship. Before he became twenty, he completed the study of all scriptures.

Shri Vallabhacharya left this world and went to his abode when Shri Gopinathaji was twenty. At this small age, too, he shouldered complete responsibility of becoming the head of the Sampradaya. He had a son, Shri Purusottamaji (V.S. 1588 - 1620) and two daughters Shri Satyabhama-betiji and Laksmi-betiji.

The greatness and importance of Shri Gopinathaji in Suddhadvaita Pustibhakti Sampradaya becomes apparent by seeing following verses. Shri Vitthalanathaji pays his obeisance to his elder brother Shri Gopinathaji and extols him in the following verse:

1Yadanugrahato jantuh, sarva-duhkha-tigo bhavet;
Tam-aham sarvada vande; srimad Vallabha-nandanam.

Meaning: I always prostrate to Shri Vallabhacharya's illustrious son Shri Gopinathaji, by whose divine grace, the beings go beyond all the worldly sufferings.

Similarly, Shri Purusottamaji delineates the character of Shri Gopinathaji:

Shrivallabha-pratinidhim, tejorashim dayarnavam;
Gunatitam gunanidhim; shrigopinatham-ashraye

Meaning: I take refuge in Shri Gopinathaji, who is the representative of Mahaprabhu Shri Vallabhacharya, who is the storehouse of effulgence, the ocean of compassion, who is beyond all earthly attributes and who is the very treasure of divine attributes.

Father's love:

As it was said, from his early childhood Shri Gopinathaji was keenly devoted to the divine worship and remembrance of Bhagvan. He used to take his daily Maha-prasada (left over of the divine food offered to Bhagavan) only after reciting the entire Bhagavat-Purana with all its 18000 verses. For this reason, very often he could take his Maha-prasada at the interval of about two days. This was very sad-sorrowful for his mother. Shri Vallabhacharya took a note of this and composed Shri Purusottama-sahasra-nama-stotra i.e. hymn of one thousand names of Shri Krsna, as the essence of the whole of Bhagavat-Purana for Shri Gopinathaji. Today Shri Purusottama-sahasra-nama-stotra is being recited as a daily routine in this tradition.

Sadhana-dipika:

Shri Vallabhacharya had composed a number of works to explain philosophy, doctrines, devotional course and fruit of the Pusti sect. But no independent work had been composed by Shri Vallabhacharya that may guide a disciple in living his daily life by maintaining delicate balance between devotional duties and worldly and Vaidic duties. Shri Gopinathaji accomplished this extremely important work by composing a fine small-book named 'Sadhana-dipika'. If the

instructions narrated in this work are followed in life, one can be a follower of Pusti sect in the true sense of the term.

Some preaching of Shri Gopinathaji:

- One should perform the worship of Shri Krsna, who is the origin of all.
- If one spends even a moment without the remembrance of Bhagavan, one is flung far from Bhagavan.
- Devotion cannot be obtained without the grace of God, Guru, good company and the study of Shri Bhagavat.
- One should have respect for one's Guru.
- Devotion can be obtained in an early stage if one performs the worship and remembrance of Bhagavan with reality, purity, faith, truth, mercy-charity and control over senses.
- Consciousness about the negative and harmful aspects of the objects, control over senses and contentment in what one has obtained these three are the remedies to develop detachment.
- One should always be conscious so as not to be deviated from Bhagavan.
- Worldly I-ness and My-ness cause hindrance in devotion.
- Company of a non-Vaisnava should not be sought.
- All worldly and Vaidic duties be performed through the offered objects to Bhagavan.
- A Vaisnava should welcome guests and help miserable.
- One should not make exhibition of idol, worship and offerings of Bhagavan. (One who is closed but is not a Vaisnava, and one who is a Vaisnava but not close, both of them should not be allowed to behold worship or Svarupa i.e. idol).
- Only those who are very much close to one who is worshipping should be allowed to behold his idol.
- One should attentively study Shri Bhagavat in ex-worship time.

Going to the Abode of Lila:

After untimely death of the son Shri Purusottamaji, Shri Gopinathaji went for pilgrimage. During this he visited Shri Jagannathapuri. It is said the there he merged into the idol of Shri Jagannathaji while beholding Him. He lived in this world for very few years.

1. A being, by whose grace,
does go beyond all the miseries of the world,
To him, always my obeisance be,

the son of Mahaprabhu Shri Vallabha.

2. The Representative of Shri Vallabha,
The storehouse of effulgence,
The ocean of compassion,
Who is beyond worldly attributes,
The treasure of transcendental attributes,
I take refuge in Shri Gopinathaji.

Shri Vitthalanatha-prabhucarana

Shri Vitthalanathaji was the younger son of Shri Vallabhacharya. In Pusti-sect he is addressed in the names of Shri Gusaniji and Shri Prabhucarana. He had born at the village of Charanadri (Caranat/Cunara) in V.S.1572 (A.D.1516). When he was only 15 years old Shri Vallabhacharya went to the eternal abode. He had extreme love and respect for his elder brother Shri Gopinathaji and would accomplish all works by taking permission from Shri Gopinathaji.

Divine Renouncement:

Shri Vitthalanathaji was fond of arts of music, painting, horse-riding etc. He regularly played on Vina (stringed music instrument) before Shri Thakuraji awoke. His fingers had hardened because of friction with wire of Vina. Having seen this, one day his father Shri Vallabhacharya said a word that Shri Thakuraji would feel uneasy at the touch of such tough fingers. Everything is insignificant before the happiness of deity. From that day onwards he stopped playing the Vina.

Once Shri Vitthalanathaji was offering ornaments to his deity. At that time a disciple brought a big amount of money as a present. When the coins were dropped down, it made a loud sound. On account of this Shri Vitthalanathaji's mind was deviated from his deity for a moment. What would happen by using the wealth if at the mere sound of which ones mind is deviated from Bhagavan! With this thought in his mind, Shri Vitthalanathaji refused to accept all that money.
Extension of worship for the dedication of everything:
Shri Vallabhacharya says in his work 'Tatvarth-dipa-nibandha':

Dhanam sarvatmana tyajyam, taccet tyaktum na sakyate;
Krsnartham tat niyunjita, Krsno'narthasya varakah.

Meaning: Wealth leads ones mind away from Bhagavan and so, by all means, it should be abandoned. But in case, it is not possible to give up wealth, it should be employed in the worship of Bhagavan. If it is done, Bhagavan Shri Krsna will remove all evils that issue forth from wealth.

Through the initiation of Self-Dedication a disciple dedicates to Shri Krsna everything including his body, members of his family, house, wealth etc., verbally. In order to dedicate, physically, all objects in the worship of Bhagavan as he promised at the time of initiation by holding Tulsi-leaves in his hands, Shri Vallabhacharya showed the way of worshipping Bhagavan in one's home. But, here one problem arises. Living in house with family requires money and as seen earlier the accumulation of wealth spoils the mind of devotee, what to do then? As a solution

of this problem Shri Vitthalanathaji prescribed the kind of worship with all the pomp of rich food, wealth and embellishment in worship so that a devotee can dedicate to Bhagavan everything as promised. If a disciple of Pusti-sect performs worship of Shri Krsna in his home by dedicating all his belongings than all that is dedicated to Shri Krsna will become divine. Dedicated things lose their harmfulness. Now, a devotee can use those dedicated things as a leftover of Shri KrsnYa without fear.

Compassion for Every Being:

Shri Vitthalanathaji's disciple Shri Narayanadas was the minister of the Emperor. Once Shri Narayandas employed a disciple of Pusti-sect named: Shri Vitthaladas. If he got job by showing that he was a disciple of Pusti-sect, it would be the ill-usage of his faith. Thinking so, Shri Vitthaladas never said he was a disciple of Pusti-sect. Once Shri Vitthaladas made a mistake in the job. Shri Narayandas imprisoned him and passed a sentence of lashing one hundred blows. Some days after this incident, Shri Vitthalanathaji happened to come to a nearby village. So, both Shri Narayanadas and Shri Vitthaladas accidentally gathered before Shri Vitthalanathaji. At the time of meal, Shri Vitthalanathaji saw the signs of blows on the body of Shri Vitthaladas. When asked, he told Shri Vitthalanathaji everything that had happened. On hearing this, Shri Vitthalanathaji scolded Shri Narayanadas: ""What if you did not know him a disciple of Pusti-sect; you at least knew that he is a living being. Such cruelty does not behave a Vaisnav. A disciple of the Pusti-sect should be merciful towards every being".

Composition of Works:

Shri Vitthalanathaji composed independent works like for the better understanding of the doctrines of the Path of Pusti. As Shri Vallabhacharya's commentary on the Brahmasutra was not available completely, Shri Vitthalanathaji wrote the commentary on the remaining Sutras. The style of Shri Vallabhacharya's writing is compact, it says much more in a few words. For this reason Shri Vitthalanathaji wrote commentaries on various principal works of Shri Vallabhacharya so that nobody can misinterpret the doctrines of Shri Vallabhacharya.

- Bhasya on Brahmasutras, which Shri Vallabhacharya could not complete.
- Commentary on Gayatri Mantra Bhasya
- Commentary on Yamunastakam of Shri Vallabhacharya
- Commentary on Siddhantamuktavali of Shri Vallabhacharya
- Commentary on Navaratnam of Shri Vallabhacharya
- Vidvan-mandanam
- Bhaktihetunirnaya
- Bhaktihamsa
- Gitatatparyam
- Letters to his elder brother
- Letters to his sons
- Various Vijnapti'
- Vrajacaryastapadi
- Svapnadarsanam
- Guptarasa
- Raksasmaranam

- Chatuhsloki
- 2nd Catuhsloki
- Utsava-nirnaya etc.
- Srngara-rasa-mandanam
- STOTRAs:
- Shri Sarvottamastotram
- Shri Vallabhastakam
- Shri Sfurat-krsn&Uapremamrtam
- Four Arya
- Two Paryamka
- Shri Yamunastapadi
- Bhujangaprayatastakam
- Shri Radha-prarthana-catuhsloki
- Shri Gokulastakam
- Shri Lalita-tribhangi-stotram
- Shri Svaminiprarthana
- Shri Svaministotram etc.

Pilgrimages:

Along with the writing of doctrinal and devotional works Shri Vitthalanathaji went to pilgrimage to show the devotional path of Pusti to divine Pusti-beings. No other means of carriages for pilgrimage were available at that time except chariots and carts. Even in such condition he went from Vraj to visit Dvaraka at the farthest end of Gujarat for not less than six times. Shri Dvarakadhisa asked Shri Vallabhacharya to excavate Him from the well in Ladava village near Dvaraka and enshrine in an empty temple of Dvaraka. Bhagavan Shri Dvarakadhisa at present seated in an island: Sankhoddhara (Bet-Dvaraka). On account of Shri Vallabhacharya's passion for Shri Dvarakadhisa, Shri Vitthalanathaji also was attracted towards Shri Dvarakadhisa. This was the reason why Shri Vitthalanathaji so frequently visited Dwaraka. During these pilgrimages he took a number of divine beings in his refuge. Among his disciples there were people from different classes and societies. He took in his refuge people like thieves, prostitutes, hunters, fishermen etc. and turned them to the path of Pusti. He took in his refuge and uplifted people born in the casts like Muslim, Pathan etc. The effulgent character of Shri Vitthalanathaji can be seen in detail in book "252 Vaisnavavarta" and devotional songs of the disciples.

To eternal abode:

Thus, in his time of manifestation of 72 years Shri Vitthalanathaji unceasingly persevered for the all-round promotion of the sect. Knowing that his mission on the earth was over, he entered the cave of mount Giriraja and disappeared.

Notes:

1. Wealth, by all means be abandoned;
   if its not possible to abandon it,
   be it used in the worship of Bhagavan,

Shri Yamunaji

Manifestation for the upliftment of devotees:

The arrival of Shri Yamunaji is particularly for enhancing the sentiment of devotion for Bhagavan in people who are endowed with the sentiment of Pushti-devotion by Bhagavan. Hence, Shri Vallabhacarya praises Shri Yamunaji in the hymn of 'Shri Yamunashtakam' by saying: 'Bhuvanapavanim'. This means "One who purifies the earth". Commenting on this Shri Harirayacarana says that the epithet: "the purifier of the earth" means that Shri Yamunaji is the purifier of the earth in the form of the bodies of the Pushti-beings. Hence, if any ignorant Pushti-being drinks the water of Shri Yamunaji or bathes in it with deep faith and without any worldly or other-worldly desires, Shri Yamunaji bestows upon him the devotion of Bhagavan Shri Krshna.

The Greatness of Shri Yamunaji:

Shri Yamunaji witnessed various divine pastimes, Shri Krishna played at the time of His incarnation. At that time Bhagavan frequently had contact with Shri Yamunaji through bath and drink of the water of Shri Yamunaji. So, at the very touch of the water of Shri Yamunaji the devotee experiences the thrill of the touch of Bhagavan Himself. Moreover, because of the touch of the feet of Bhagavan the dust of the banks of Shri Yamunaji has been endowed with so much greatness and significance that even by its touch anti-devotional sentiments are removed from us.

Effulgence:

Shri Yamunaji has attributes similar to those of Bhagavan Shri Krishna. Hence, Shri Vallabhacarya has extolled in the hymn of "Shri Yamunashtakam' effulgence that is conducive to Pushti devotees.

1. Shri Yamunaji is the bestower of all accomplishments of the devotional path of Pushti.
2. Shri Yamunaji enhances the devotee's devotion in Bhagavan Shri Krishna.
3. Shri Yamunaji removes all obstacles that stand as a wall between the Pushti beings and Bhagavan.
4. The attribute of Shri Yamunaji and Shri Krishna being similar Shri Yamunaji easily establishes the relation of the being with Bhagavan.
5. Shri Yamunaji destroys devilishness that has entered into being by the import of the age of Kali.
6. Just as the devotees of Vraja had obtained Bhagavan's love by worshipping Shri Yamunaji, similarly Pushti-beings, too, can obtain Bhagavan's love by reverently drinking its water and bathing into it.
7. Shri Yamunaji is the bestower of newness (divinity) to the body of a Pushti-being so as to be fitting in the worship of Bhagavan.
8. The touch of Shri Yamunaji's water is similar to that of Bhagavan Shri Krishna.

Bhagavan has placed devotional sentiment of Pushti in the divine beings but so long as Bhagavan does not wish to manifest or enhance the devotional sentiment in them, it does not have its manifestation. Sometimes Bhagavan Himself does this type of grace, or sometimes through a preceptor, a devotee or through deity like Shri Yamunaji. Just as a child obtains the favour of father by pleasing its mother, similarly, the favour of the supreme Father Shri Krishna can be obtained by

pleasing Shri Yamunaji who is like a mother to all Pushti-beings. Hence, singing her praise in the hymn of 'Shri Yamunashtakam' Mahaprabhu writes:

[1]Ananta-guna-bhushite shiva-viran^Uci-deva-stute
Ghanaghana-nibhe sada dhruva-parashrabhishtade
Vishuddha-mathuratate sakala-gopa-gopi-vrte
Krpa-jaladhi-san^Jshrite mama-manah sukham^J bhavayah

Meaning: Shri Yamunaji is endowed with endless attributes. Gods like Shiva and Brhama who have been longing to behold Shri Krshna extol her. Shri Yamunaji looks as beautiful black as the clouds in the monsoon season. Shri Yamunaji is the bestower of the best outcome to Dhruva and Parashara who perform austerities on the bank of Shri Yamunaji. Shri Yamunaji on whose bank the city of Mathura is situated always remains surrounded by the devotees of Vraja. O Shri Yamunaji! You who are always eager to mingle into the ocean of Grace: Shri Krshna, grace me so that I may have happiness in my mind.

1. Embellished with endless attributes,
Extolled by Siva, Brhma and other gods,
Looking black as clouds
Bestower of the best to Dhruva and Parashara
On whose bank pure Mathura city is there
Surrounded by Goaps and Gopis all
One that mingles into the ocean of grace
Grace me that my mind be happy

Book for further reading:

Shri Yamunashtakam.

Shri Krishna

Demonical beings cannot know of Bhagavan:

The beings whom Bhagavan does not grant his devotion or liberation from births and deaths are called 'Pravahi' or 'Asuri' i.e. demonic beings. As against this beings whom Bhagavan grants devotion or liberation are called "divine'. Says Bhagavan Shri Krishna in the Gita:

> "Demonic beings do not comprehend me as the Supreme-Brahma. On the other hand, since I am manifested with the human body, they recognize me as an ordinary human being or a great man, at the most. As they are ignorant due to Maya, my nescient power, they cannot have true knowledge that of mine. Because of their ignorance they become doers of evil deeds, insensible and mean. And, therefore, these demonic people do not take refuge in me".

Acquisition of Bhagavan's knowledge after removal of ignorance:

So wondrous is the character of Bhagavan Shri Krishna that even men of great learning and deities like Indra, the god of gods, fail to know him, what to talk of ordinary beings? This can be understood more clearly with this anecdote from Shri Bhagavat-Purana:

> Shri Nandarayaji and all the inhabitants of Vraja used to perform worship of Indra every year. So Indra had become proud.
>
> Once Shri Krishna thought: "How strange it is that when I, the God of gods, dwell in Vraja, the inhabitant of Vraja take refuge in other gods! I shall have to do something so that they may give up their refuge in other gods". Shri Krishna persuaded all "We are dwellers of forests and mountains. Cows are our true wealth. We earn our livelihood by forests and cows. Where from will it rain if there are no mountains and forests? So, let us worship Mount Govardhan". With the conformity of Shri Krishna, people of Vraja began preparation to worship Mount Giriraj.
>
> As soon as Indra knew this, he became red with wrath. He commanded clouds: "Only I am god. The inhabitants of Vraja have insulted me persuaded as they are by an ordinary proud man like Shri Krishna. Forthwith, destroy the whole of Vraja".
>
> Commanded by Indra, clouds began to pour heavy rain on Vraja with terrible thunder and lightning. The whole Vraja was as if drowned in the torrential rain. The helpless Vraja dwellers went to refuge in Shri Krishna and began to pray.
>
> Shri Krishna thought that Vraja dwellers are now free from the refuge in other gods, and their refuge in Him is become firm, so, in order to protect Vraja dwellers and destroy the pride of Indra, Shri Krishna raised the huge Mount Govardhana on one hand just as a small child raises an umbrella in his hand without any effort. All the inhabitants of Vraja came up beneath the mount along with their cows, children and wealth. Indra poured tumble rain for seven days but Vraja was well and good in the protection of Shri Krishna.
>
> At last Indra realized the divinity of Shri Krishna. He found himself guilty and became free from pride. He fell at the feet of Shri Krishna and begged pardon for his offence. Shri Krishna excused Indra and said:

> "A being blinded by pride of his trivial power and wealth, could not see that I always stand ready to punish. But, I slowly take away wealth prestige and all belongings of a person upon whom I want to shower my grace. By the lost of wealth etc. a man develops detachment from the worldly matters and gets attached with Me. Your pride has now been destroyed. Now, rule over heaven without keeping any pride!"

Thus, we have seen that divine beings, too, become void of knowledge of Bhagavan and His Lila because of sudden outburst of demonic sentiments like greed, infatuation, jealousy, pride, anger, lust etc. So, in the Gita Bhagavan says:

> "Among thousands of people, only a few make efforts to have accomplishment. And among those who make efforts only a few can know me in the true sense".

What makes difficult in acquiring knowledge of Bhagavan?

In the Gita Bhagavan Himself answers to it:

> "I cover up with Maya (nescient power) intellect of those demonic men whom I do not wish to have my knowledge. Hence, being ignorant they are not able to know me".

One can know Bhagavan only to that extent to which Bhagavan removes his ignorance. Just as we can see that much part of the sun as the clouds hiding it begins to move before our eyes.

The knowledge and attainment of Bhagavan through devotion:

At various places in Puranas it can be seen that seeker of knowledge, sages and Munis undergo austerities for innumerable years to know and obtain Bhagavan and yet they fail. The inhabitants of Vraja had not adopted any kind of means like sacrificial actions, charity, rites, austerities etc., for the attainment of Bhagavan and yet Bhagavan Himself incarnated amidst them. Why so?

Being a Supreme Brahma, Shri Krishna is an overriding entity above all the natural or supernatural phenomenon. Like Brahma, Shiva or Indra; Shri Krishna is not duty-bound to give a glance or fruit by means such as sacrifice, rites or recitation of Mantra etc. And hence, efforts that are made to know or attain Shri Krishna with pride of being self-sufficient, do not become successful. But if Shri Krishna graces one, he can obtain Shri Krishna and His Devotion like the inhabitants of Vraja, without even adopting any kind of means. Irrelevant of the grace of the God, the pride of self-sufficiency is called 'Sadhan-abhiman' i.e. the pride of Means. Pilgrimage, Mantra, Rites, Spiritual knowledge, Worship etc., are called 'Sadhan'='Means'. One can't know or obtain Bhagavan by any of these means, shown in scriptures, except single-minded devotion attained by the grace of Bhagavan. In the Gita Bhagavan says:

Nahm vedair na tapasa na danena na cejyaya,
Shakya evamvidho drashtum drashtavanasi mam yatha;

bhaktya tvananyaya shakyo aham evamvidhorjuna,
jnatum drastum ca tatvena praveshtum ca parantapa.

Meaning: O Arjuna! My look, such as you have had, is not possible by any means like Vedas, austerity, charity, sacrifice etc. It's only through singleminded devotion that one can have this kind of my knowledge and look. And it's only through devotion that one can enter into Me1.

Full of mutually contradictory attributes:

In scriptures Bhagavan has been described as 'Viruddha-dharmashraya'. It means: full or base of mutually contradictory attributes. That is, the Supreme Brahma is all-pervading as it has become the insentient universe, and at the same time it is atom in the form of sentient beings. Similarly, He is the creator and at the same time He Himself is the creation. Likewise, He is both; transcendental and imminent, too. Showing this in the Gita Shri Krishna says:

Yaccapi sarvabhutanam bijam tadaham arjuna!;
na tadasti vina yat syat maya bhutam caracaram.

Meaning: O Arjuna! Whatever cause of the origin of sentient and insentient objects is there, it is only I. There's in this universe no living and lifeless object that is void of Me[2].

Omnipresent:

One question that arises here is this: Just as the air or space that are "Vyapaka' i.e. all-pervading, and that's why they have no shape/form, similarly, scriptures say that Bhagavan is also all-pervading, can we say therefore, that Bhagavan has no form? Can we say, in other words, that Bhagavan is Nirakara formless? Bhagavan has answered this question in the Gita by describing his all-pervasiveness and personal both aspects. Because of His typical character of consisting mutually contradictory attributes, in spite of being all-pervasive, Shri Krishna can take as many forms as He wishes. Conversely, it can be said that in spite of being personal Shri Krishna is all-pervasive also without any logical or practical difficulty. In the form of Akshra-brahma i.e. creator, sustainer and destroyer of the universe; Shri Krishna is all-pervading and, and therefore incomprehensible. After describing His impersonal character of Akshara-brahma, Shri Krishna gives the description of His personal character in Gita this way:

Purushah sa prah Parth!
bhaktya labhyas tvananyaya

Meaning: One who is greater than even, Akshara-Brahma, that Supreme Being (Shri Krishna) is obtainable only through devotion4.

Names are many but Shri Krishna is one:

In scriptures like Veda, Smrti, Purana etc., Shri Krishna is narrated by various names such as Para-brahma (The supreme Being), Param-eshvara (The Supreme God), Param-atma (The Supreme Soul), Bhagavan (That which incarnates on earth), Antaryami (The Indweller), Jagadisha (The Lord of the World) and so on. Not only this, but the narration of gods, goddesses and incarnations as the form of the Supreme Truth in the Purana is to be considered, essentially, as the narration of Bhagavan Shri Krishna only. Because, it is Shri Krishna Himself who is playing sports by holding the forms of gods and goddesses. All the gods and goddesses are believed to be the parts of Shri Krishna in the scriptures:

Sarvadevamayo harih

Meaning: Shri Krishna dwells in all gods.

This means that all gods are parts and parcels of Shri Krishna. Just as one may praise the hands, the eyes, the nose etc., of some person but, ultimately, it must be considered as the praise of that individual only. Similarly, all gods and goddesses being the part of Bhagavan they are narrated as the Supreme Element. Essentially, it is the narration of Bhagavan Shri Krishna.

The significance of the various names and forms of Bhagavan:

One and single man can be described in many ways from the point of view of his relations occupations etc. For example, a man is a father for his children, a servant for his master, the head for the members of his family, an officer in the office and so on. We can understand that names by which he is called differ with reference to various vocations, acts and relations of the individual, but the person does not differ, he remains the same. Similarly, when Shri Krishna is narrated as creator, sustainer and destroyer of the universe, then he is called "Brahma'. His worshipping form is called Bhagavan, the Supreme Being or Shri Krishna. And, because He controls over the administration of the universe he is called the Antaryami (Indweller) or the Being. And when he alights on the earth in specific form, he is addressed as the incarnation of Nrasimha, Vamana, Rama etc. Inspite of this wide variety of his names and forms, Bhagavan Shri Krishna is only one.

Purpose of manifestation:

Whenever the devilish unrighteous people make havoc on the earth, Bhagavan incarnates for their destruction. When Adharma become potential and Dharma is placed in difficulty, Bhagavan alights on the earth for the establishment of the Dharma; and sometimes Bhagavan takes incarnation on the earth for the upliftment of the devotees.

Kinds of incarnations:

Mostly the President gets his work done through his ministers, ambassadors or other employees. But sometimes when any important work is to be dealt with, the president himself does it. Similarly, Bhagavan, too, does the works of destroying devilish people of establishing the Dharma through his Aveshavatara or Amshavatara. But so far as the upliftment of his devotees is concerned, Bhagavan Himself incarnates on the earth.

Scripture uses word 'Bhagavan' in specific sense. It means: One in whom all the six attributes are in their extremist measure.

1. Aishvarya (effulgence)
2. Virya (heroic)
3. Yasha (fame)
4. Shri (Wealth)
5. Jnana (knowledge) and
6. Vairagya (Detachment).

Scriptures clearly state that only Shri Krishna is Bhagavan. It is Bhagavan who holds incarnations on the earth in different ways.

1.Purna-avatara: When Bhagavan Shri Krishna, with all his perfect potentialities, alights on the earth that incarnation is called the "Purnavatara' the perfect incarnation. Only Shri Krishna is the perfect incarnation.

2.Amsha-avatara: When Bhagavana Himself does not incarnate but manifest some of his attributes on the earth, that incarnation is called the "Amshavatara' i.e. the partial incarnation or the incarnation of the phase or the attribute. For example: Vedavyasa who composed Vedas and Purans and who divided Vedas in different sections is the incarnation of Bhagavan's attribute of Knowledge.

3.Avesha-avatara: When Bhagavan enters into someone's body for doing some specific work, it is called "Aveshavatara' incarnation of the Entrance. This kind of entrance is restricted only to some specific work. Parashuram was the incarnation of Entrance of Bhagavan.

Some ignorant people misunderstand Shri Krishna only as an ordinary incarnation of Bhagavan. Again, some insensible people consider Shri Krishna only as a Man of the Age i.e. Yugapurusha or a Great Man or only a Yogeshvara (one who has obtained some accomplishments of Yoga). All these people who are ignorant of the true character of Shri Krishna are recognised as demonical beings by Shri Krishna Himself. Just as some actor acts on the stage by holding different kinds of dresses, similarly, Bhagavan Shri Krishna takes incarnations by holding forms of Varaha, Matsya, Rama etc., on the stage of the world that he has created. Hence, after describing all incarnations it is said in Bhagavat:

Ete camsha-kala pumshah Krshnastu Bhagavan svayam

Meaning: All these are partial incarnations and incarnations of phase, Shri Krishna Himself is the Bhagavan, The perfect incarnation.

Conclusion:

A devotee crosses the worldly sea through hearing, singing and remembering the divine birth and pastimes of Bhagavan Shri Krishna. Hence Bhagavan Says:

Janma karma ca me divyam evam yo vetti tattvatah
tyaktva deham punrjanma neti mameti so'rjuna

Meaning: O Arjuna! One who knows my birth (incarnation) and deeds (pastimes) as divine, really he knows me and obtains me. He will not be born again.

Notes:

1. Not by Vedas, and austirity, neither by charity and secrifice,
   It's possible to behold Me, as you have beheld me now
   Only by unique devotion it's possible, to have of this kind O Arjuna!
   knowledge and appearance of me, and by devotion one can enter into Me.

2. Whatever seed of all beings is there
   it's I Myself, O Arjuna!,

There exists, except me, no object
Sentient as well as insentient.

3. Akshara-Brahma is the abode of Shri Krishna, destination of the followers of the path of Knowledge, it is the place attained after liberation. It's univers' creater, sustainer and destroyer aspect of Shri Krishna. The Sat-cit-Ananda attributes of the Supreme Brahma are menifested in Akshara-Brahma.
4. That Supreme Being, O Parth!
is obtainable only thru' devotion.

Book for further reading:

Siddhantamuktavali in Sodshagrantha.
Mularupaviveka in Prameyaratnarnava by Shri Lalubhattaji.
Vedantacintamani by Shri Gattulalaji.

We have seen that Brahma is attributive of Sat, Chit and Ananda (eternal Existence, eternal Consciousness and eternal Bliss). Hiding His attributes of Ananda when Brahma manifests with the attributes of 'Sat' and 'Cit', that manifested form of Brahma is called 'Jiva' a being. Beings are recognised by the respiratory system. Therefore; trees, beasts, birds, human beings etc. that are endowed with the respiratory system are called 'Being'.

In spite of becoming universe Brahma remains invisible in the universe. Similarly, Brahma is imperceptible in beings even he himself has become beings. This is because the beings have in it only 'Sat' and 'Cit' parts of Brahma manifested, the attribute of 'Ananda' remains hidden. Therefore, ordinary people do not experience Brahma in individual beings.

Due to concealment of bliss, being is endowed with the body and is subject to birth and death. For this reason the being undergoes the experience of I-ness, My-ness, pleasure and pain. This can be understood easily in the following illustration.

An employee working in the court of a king would receive royal dress and respect as long as he serve in the court. But at the time when the king would snatch away his title, he would not only cease to receive royal treatment but also he would become lackluster, feeble and discontented. And when the king would again please with him and place him in the court, once again, he would be a courtier and would receive royal treatment. Similarly, when Brahma wishes to create the universe, innumerable beings are separated from Akshara-brahma like sparks come out from the fire. With the concealment of bliss beings become lusterless, feeble, dependent and miserable. They become dependent and deficient, powerless and painful, ignorant and delude. They cultivate I-ness and My-ness and intense attachment in the worldly things. But when the Supreme Being graces beings, they obtain their original identity.

States of Beings:

Beings have three states:

1. Pure
2. Bonded
3. Liberated.

Pure: When a being is separated from Brahma the attribute of bliss conceals in him. As long as being remain untouched with Avidya (Nescience) he is called, up to that state, 'pure'.

Bounded: Contact with nescience causes I-ness and My-ness and the bondage of birth and death to Jiva. In this state the being is called 'bounded' or 'worldly'.

Liberated: When contact with Avidya, nescience power ends, the being becomes free from the deaths and births. In this state the being is called ''liberated'.

Types of being:

Bhagavan has created this universe for the Lila (play). As variety is necessary in the play, Bhagavan created beings of different types. They are classified in three types:

1. Pravahi Beings
2. Maryada Beings and
3. Pushti Beings.

Deep-rooted god-made inner nature of beings like Pravaha-nature, Maryada-nature and Pushti-nature compels being to develop interest in the course of life that be fitting to them. Therefore, Pravahi Beings, bounded by their god-made nature, follow the Pravahi path. Maryada beings have liking in the Maryada Marga and so they follow that Marga. Pushti Beings follow Pushti Marga as they develop interest in the Pushti Marga.

Identification of Beings:

Just as the original nature of people of different kinds can be recognised by their behaviour, liking, appearance etc., likewise the original nature/potentiality of beings which is predetermined by Bhagavan also can be recognised by their liking and behaviour. In scriptures like Gita and Bhagavat there is a detailed discussion about the types of beings, their behaviour and liking and the result to which they meet.

Pravahi Beings: Anger, greed, pride, ignorance, jealousy, un-holiness, pleasure lovingness, afflicting others, cruelty etc. are some of features of Pravahi beings. But deviation from the devotion of Bhagavan can be regarded as the most distinctive characteristic of Pravahi Beings.

Maryada Beings: Maryada beings have no liking for worldly or otherworldly matters. They are having characteristics like chastity, mercy, austerity, holiness, gladness etc. They are interested in the paths of Action, Knowledge and Devotion described in scriptures to obtain liberation.

Pushti Beings: Pushti Beings are not interested in the matter of this world, in the other world or in the liberation. The worship of Shri Krishna is dearer to them than the obtainment of liberation.

The above mentioned characteristics are generally seen in the respective beings. Sometimes because of the company of Pushti being, Maryada Beings acquire temporary characteristics of Pushti Beings. Similarly, the characteristics of Pravahi Beings can also be observed in Pushti Beings and Maryada beings. Because of the company reciprocal characteristics that are seen in one another beings are called the Avesha, outburst of external agency. Perhaps Pravahi flare may enter into a Pushti Being but his original nature does not change because of the Avesha. In the same way if Pushti or Maryada flare enters into Pravahi beings, Pravahi beings do not turn up Pushti or Maryada being only by it.

Thus, by knowing different nature, the deed and the fruit of three kinds of beings, various doubts can be removed.

Further reading:

Pushti-pravaha-maryada-bheda in Shodasha-grantha.

Bhakti-hansa by Shri Vitthalanathaji
Jiva-Viveka in Prameya-ratnarnava by Shri Lalubhattaji

The Universe

Matters like an intrinsic nature of the universe and soul, the origin of creation, liberation, incarnation, Brahma, deities, courses of the attainment of Bhagavan and liberation etc. have been narrated in the scriptures like Veda, Brahmasutra, Gita, Bhagavat etc. As there is no other way to know these things except scriptures, these matters are strictly considered as Scriptural. The logic behind this is: as eyes can't deal with the matters like sound, test, smell etc. or as ear can't deal with the matters like colour, shape, smell etc. or as nose can't deal with the matters like sound, colour, test etc. similarly; ordinary senses and intellect of the human-being or scientific instruments can't deal with the scriptural matters. Therefore, as far as these matters are concerned may it be logically, mathematically or scientifically perfect no conclusion can be regarded as authentic that goes against the conclusion of the scriptures.

To clarify this it is said that the authenticity of scriptures specifically lies in the matters that can't be explained or known through senses, logic, science etc. This is the only universally accepted tradition regarding the means of knowledge among the theists of Bharat. Therefore, the definition of theist and atheist is also given in the light of scriptural faith. That is to say one who considers scriptures like Veda, Smrti, Purana etc. as authentic (in above mentioned matters) is called a theist whereas, one who does not consider scriptures as authentic, (in above mentioned matters) is called 'an atheist'.

Purpose of the Universe:

When children playing the game are asked about the purpose behind their playing game they will say that they are playing for fun. Similarly, when scriptures are asked about the purpose of Bhagavan behind creating universe, the answer is the same. Bhagavan has created the universe for plying game, for fun. Bhagavan has no purpose other than fun. To explain these scriptures describe the universe as Bhagavan's Lila or Krida, the play of Bhagavan.

All is Brahma:

Variety is necessary in any game. No variety, no game. Before the creation of the universe there was nothing except the Supreme Being. How can one play in this state even though one wishes? Hence, as Upanishad says: Brahma desired, "I am one I may be many". No sooner did Brahma entertain this wish then he acquired the forms of all insentient objects and sentient beings. I.e. Brahma Himself became the insentient objects and sentient beings. Hence, it is said in the Upanishad:

Sarvam khalu idam brahma

Meaning: All this (universe) is indeed Brahma.

Creation by Manifestation and Concealment:

Here, a question arises: if all is Brahma, why Brahma is not seen or experienced? A pot is seen as a pot and a horse is seen as a horse. Explaining its reason Shri Vallabhacharya says that in Upanishad Brahama has been narrated as having three attributes namely Sat, Chit and Anand. 'Sat' means: existence, 'Chit' means: life or consciousness and 'Ananda' means: endlessness, all pervasiveness, endless attributes that are transcendental or divine etc.

We have seen that Brahma possesses endless divine powers. Among those endless powers there are two powers: 1.the power of manifestation i.e. Avirbhava and 2.the power of concealment i.e. Tirobhava. Brahma creates the universe by using these powers. In other words, when Brahma is manifested with only 'Sat' attribute, hiding the attributes of 'Chit' and 'Ananda', that manifestation of Brahma is called 'insentient'. The earth, the water, the light, the air and the space are insentient. The whole universe is made up of these five insentient elements. These five elements are also called Pancha-maha-bhuta. As it is Brahma that has become the universe, the universe is considered as Satya / Brahmatmaka real and not illusory. But as the 'Chit' and 'Ananda' attributes of Brahma are not manifested in the universe and as human intellect is covered by ignorance, ordinary human beings can't see the universe as Brahma. For example, we all know very well that every man has in him the emotions like anger, fear, pleasure etc. in more or less degrees. But whatever emotion man shows at particular time, only that can be experienced. All other emotions though present in him remain concealed and therefore, cannot be experienced by others. Similarly, though the universe is Brahma, it manifests only 'Sat' attribute and keep other attributes hidden and so the universe seen as 'insentient'.

We have seen why the universe appears as insentient even when the sentient and blissful Brahma himself has become the universe. However, it is not so that the universe appears insentient to all. For instance, a child who wears green coloured glasses sees everything green and ignorant as he is, he believes that everything is green. But grown up man wearing green coloured glasses, understands it very well that though all things are seen green, all are not green. They appear green because of the green spectacles. As against these two cases, a man who hasn't put on spectacles of any colour, sees things in their original colours.

In the same way, 1. beings whose ignorance is all removed by Bhagavan sees the universe as Brahma without any kind of elusion. 2. Those whose ignorance is not completely removed by Bhagavan do not see the universe with Brahma. The universe appears to them as perishable and insentient. However, by the study of scriptures they understand that the universe is Brahma and the attributes like origin, destruction, insentient etc. are experienced because of their ignorance. Just as the grown up man with green spectacles sees everything green but understands that all is not indeed green. Whereas, 3. people whose ignorance has not at all been removed by Bhagavan are not able to see even that much distinction. So, they, like the child with green goggles, who takes all things to be green, understand that the universe which is virtually Brahma is insentient and subject to birth and death.

In fact there is nothing in the universe that is subject to birth and death. Just as when water is boiled it vapourizes and when cooled it again becomes water. Similarly, everything is subject to transformation into manifestation and concealment in accordance with the wish of Bhagavan. Nothing can be produced out of vacuum and nothing can be destroyed to finish. What is possible is to manifest the thing that is unmanifest or to change that manifest into unmanifested.

The God is pervading all over the universe. So, one should never despise it. As willed by Bhagavan, bliss is not manifested in it. So, the seekers of The Bliss do not struggle to find bliss in it. They remain detached to the world and attach themselves to Bhagavan.

Books for further reading:
Prapancha-Viveka and Khyati-Viveka in Prameyaratnarnava by Shri Lalubhattaji.

The Path

According to the scriptures Bhagavan has created chiefly three kinds of beings.

A. Pushti-beings,
B. Maryada-beings and
C. Pravahi / Asuri-beings.

Pushti-beings attain Bhagavan's devotion and liberation through the worship and remembrance of Shri Krishna. Maryada-beings obtain liberation through Vaidic action, knowledge and worship. Whereas Pravahi / Asuri-beings undergo birth and death till the very dissolution of the universe. Bhagavan does not grant them devotion or liberation either. Corresponding to these three kinds of beings Bhagavan has also established three paths

1. Path of Pushti,
2. Path of Maryada and
3. Path of Pravaha

so that they can obtain their respective fruits through these paths. These paths can be described briefly thus:

A. Pushti-Bhakti-Marga:

'Pushti' means: grace. An overwhelming grace of Bhagavan through which Pushti-beings receive sentiment of devotion and subsequently become capable to perform devotion of Shri Krishna without keeping any worldly temptations or desire. Only through the path of devotion one can obtain the Supreme Brahma Shri Krishna; not through the paths of action, knowledge or Upasana. So, from the viewpoint of fruit, "the devotional path of Pushti" is the best of all paths.

B. Maryada-Marga:

Scriptures have shown three Paths to obtain liberation.

1.The Path of Karma,
2.The Path of Knowledge and
3.The Path of Upasana[1].

All these three paths are called the Path of Maryada in Pusti-Bhakti-Sampradaya. 'Maryada' means: confinement / restriction. As the course of these paths is restricted within the limit of scriptures, they are called 'Maryada'.

1. Karma-Marga:

The action like sacrifice etc. shown in the scriptures, are manifestation of the action of Bhagavan. By having such conviction about the nature of Actions one should perform scriptural Actions by being free from temptation of the fruits that can be had of Actions. Along with this one should dedicate fruits of Action to Bhagavan. Some actions are forbidden in scriptures. Such actions should be abandoned. The indispensable (Nitya-Naimittika) actions which are to be performed as "Daily/regular deeds' and predestined actions which are to be performed according to

the occasions should only be done. By doing this, all the bondages resulted from the actions get destroyed and one obtains liberation. Actions performed by the temptation of fruits, obtains perishable fruits of heaven etc. and not liberation from births and deaths.

2. Jnana-Marga:

The path in which liberation (in the form of union with Aksharabrahma) is being achieved through the means of knowledge shown in scriptures by having detachment and renunciation in all worldly and other worldly matters is called "the Path of Knowledge".

3. Upasana-Marga:

In this path one takes initiation of the Mantra of the name of one's favorite god as shown in the scripture of Tantra. By worshipping a god or goddess as the Supreme Reality through rites of Mantra liberation is achieved. This is called Upasana-marga or Maryada-bhakti-marga{the Path of 1Upasana or the Path of Maryada devotion.

C. Pravaha-Marga:

Beings who are not blessed to follow above spiritual paths have to undergo the vicious circle of birth and death to avail the fruits of their actions. This is called the Path of Pravaha, the endless stream of birth and death.

The beings automatically cultivates interest and faith in those paths for which Bhagavan has chosen them. This means that Bhagavan has chosen one for the path in which he is naturally interested. Hence, the blessedness of human life lies in following the path of one's choice.

Mostly all Paths have their sub-paths. Sub-paths are known as 'Sampradayas'. For instance, the Sampradayas (cults) propounded by Shri Vallabhacarya is the sub-path of the path of devotion.

Notes:

1.To worship as a part of ritual shown in the scriptures like Purana, Tantra, Upanishada etc. in order to attain liberation is called 'Upasana'. Whereas, the worship that is done out of affection without keeping any desire regarding this world, other world or liberation is called 'Bhakti'.

Books for further reading:

Pushtipravahamaryadabheda in Shodashgranth.
Bhaktihansa and Bhaktihetunirnaya by Shri Vitthalanathaji.

Sampradaya

Definition: Its a tradition in which the Mantra of the favourite god's name is given in the initiation to the disciple with the complete knowledge of that religious cult by the Guru for his upliftment is called 'Sampradaya'.

Necessity of the Sampradaya:

In the present fields of education Science, Art and Commerce are the chief branches of learning in Bharat. In Science; chemistry, Biology, Physiology, Physics etc., are the sub-branches. Similarly, there are sub-branches of learning in Art and Commerce. Every student has no liking for all the branches of learning. For this reason, at higher stage, educational institutions introduce different faculties of education for the students having interest in different branches of learning. The purpose lies behind introducing different sections of education is that the student may concentrate without deviating his mind on the subject of his choice.

In this world Bhagavan has not made all beings of the same nature and liking. Different scriptural Dharma-Sampradays have come into existence by the ordainment of Bhagavan to serve an auspicious purpose that beings of different likings may obtain the knowledge of their path and may live their life accordingly.

What may happen if different Dharma-Sampradayas do not exist?

Suppose there are no different sections like Science, Art etc. in the field of education. In that case, there remains no scope with students for the advanced study of his favourite subject. Again, he will have to study by force those subjects in which he is not interested. Similarly, if beings of different motives and likings do not find Dharma-Sampradayas showing their favourite means to attain Bhagavan, how can they progress in their spiritual life? Moreover, Bhagavan has created this world as His playground, and sport cannot take place without variety. For this reason it is necessary that there be different Sampradayas for different beings.

Sampradayas are not Enclosures:

A number of Dharma-Margas or Dharma-Sampradayas of our country are as old as Bharat's culture itself. Today this false belief is being spread out that our social unity breaks down by different Dharma-Sampradayas. In a way power-loving political leaders spread jealousy, quarrels and disquiet in society by exciting groups of labourers, farmers, employees, students, tribals etc. belonging to different languages, provinces, districts and castes. Should we believe, then, that any language or province etc., is an element that disunites all classes and breaks up the social unity? Or if we believe in it, how can we be free from it? In fact, different Sampradayas are the centres to provide training of religious courses. They are such types of schools that enhance moral prosperity of the society along with its spiritual promotion. Because of these Sampradayas sensible people experience all-pervading necessity and well-being of religion in society and not of disunity and divisibility.

In fact all scriptural Sampradayas have come into being for the people of different interest & nature by the command of Bhagavan. That is what the scripture says. All Sampradayas have got different fields of working like Action, Knowledge, Devotion etc. Hence, ideally, there should not arise any question of conflict, opposition or rivalry of one Sampradaya with any other Sampradaya.

For example, there are innumerable schools throughout the world that impart learning and training of different subjects to the students of different classes and groups. When our social unity and harmony is not endangered by these innumerable schools, how can the social unity and harmony be harmed by our schools of Dharma which can be counted on the tips of our fingers? Hence, it should be understood that the tradition of Bharata's Dharma-Sampradaya is not the symbol of narrowness or divisibility but it is the symbol of universal and all-pervading necessity of Dharma. If one can look into the all-pervasiveness contained in this variety, there remains no reason of any fear or doubt. Thus, true nature and significance of Dharma-Sampradaya Šis discussed.

As it is said, all scriptural Sampradayas have been propounded by the command of Bhagavan for different classes of people. Hence, all Sampradayas are complete, necessary and good in their own ways.

If any one wants to enter into any Dharma-Sampradaya, how shall he decide which Dharma-Sampradaya will suit him?

It is very easy to decide. What will a student interested in science and desiring to make advancement in the field of science do? No doubt, he will seek admission to that school in which the subject of his choice is taught very well. Similarly, one should enter into that Sampradaya in which his favourite course of obtaining Bhagavan is taught. But it should be remembered that a clever-wise student seeks admission only to that school which has got recognition from the respective authority. Similarly, one should take care to see that the Sampradaya in which he is going to enter is not against from the principles of the scriptures like Vedas etc., the bases of Hindu Sanatana Dharma. Moreover, one should never commit an error of following more than one Sampradayas at a time. Traveler who places his legs in two boats can't reach across. Hence, in the Gita, Shri Krishna says:

[1]*Shreyan svadharmo vigunah, paradharmat svanushthitat;*
svadharme nidhanam shreyah, paradharmo bhayavah.

Meaning:One's own duty is much better even if it is not practiced properly than others' duty that is practiced accurately. It is better if one has to die for the sake of one's own duty, but to follow other's duty is very dangerous.

In his treatise: Sarva-nirnaya-Nibandha Shri Vallabhacarya says:

[2]*Svadharmacaranam shktya Vidharmacca nivartanam*

Meaning:One should practice one's own Dharma as much as possible, but should keep away from others' Dharma.

Salient features of Sampradaya:

Every Sampradaya that is well-established and well-thought consists of minimum these four aspects:

1. Philosophical
2. Doctrinal
3. Practical and
4. The aspect of fruit.

Corresponding to these four aspects there remain four kinds of instructions of the Acaryas of Sampradaya. We shall discuss all these kinds from the point of view of the philosophy and theology of 2"Shuddhadvaita-Pushti-Bhakti-Sampradaya'.

Philosophical Instruction:

What is the supreme truth, what is the nature as well as the origin of beings and the universe, and which kind of relation the Supreme Self has with the sentient beings and the insentient world the answers in reply to these questions is called Tatvopdesh, the philosophical instruction. For example, Shri Krishna is the progenitor of the universe, none of gods and goddesses or incarnations other than Shri Krishna are the Supreme Brahma etc. is Tatvopadesha. Philosophical aspect is the true base of other three aspects for any Sampradaya.

Doctrinal Instruction:

The narration of moral rules and regulations for planning practical life on the bases of philosophical thought is called Siddhantopadesha the doctrinal instruction. For example, to perform Shri Krishna's service is the spiritual duty of every being, to resort in any god or goddess other than Shri Krishna is an offence for the disciple of the Pushti-Bhakti sect etc. are the Doctrinal Instructions.

Practical Instruction:

The directions as to how and how not to place doctrine in practical life are given in Vyavaharopadesha, The Practical Instruction. For example, having initiation of Brahmasambandha from an efficient Guru and enshrining Shri Krshna's Svarupa (idol) in home, one should perform Shri Krishna's worship with one's own body, mind and wealth. One shouldn't have initiation from an improper Guru and should not perform worship in any public places except at one's home. Worship should not be got performed other person by offering money and other objects. One should not accept money or any object from any other person for worship.

Instruction regarding the Fruit:

The doctrines and description regarding the fruit, that one obtains after the accomplishment of the course of the Sampradaya in accordance with its doctrines, is propounded in Falopadesha, the Instructions regarding the fruit. For example, devotee's mind gets constantly attached to Shri Krishna when he performs the worship of Shri Krishna in one's own home with one's own body and wealth. He becomes free from worldly I-ness and My-ness. As against this if 1. Shri Krishna is worshiped at public places like Havelis and temples 2. if the worship of Shri Krishna is performed with money received from others 3.if the worship is got performed through some other person by making a payment, nobody's mind will be attached to Shri Krishna. The mind of the donor is spoiled with pride. The receiver of money becomes Devalaka-a sinner. The preceptor who performs worship in public-temple or Haveli, later or sooner, becomes a paid worshiper or public servant or govt. servant and ultimately becomes a sinner in the eyes of scripture.

The Internal and External phases of Spiritual course:

Every Sampradaya has two phases of its course: 1.The external Phase and 2.The internal Phase. For a school-student to go to school, to respect the teachers, to wear the uniform etc., are the external phases. While to revise, to discuss and to remember the lessons are the internal aspects. As

these two aspects are necessary for obtaining education, so both the External and Internal aspects of the religious course are equally important in any Sampradaya. In the devotional path of Pushti, hearing, singing and remembering Shri Krishna's names, form and Lila are the internal aspects of its course. Performance of Shri Krishna's worship with one's own body and wealth is the External phase. When these two phases join together, perfection in following the devotional course can be achieved.

No Sampraday No success:

In the constitution of a country there are innumerable laws regarding the matters of income-tax, wealth-tax, theft, agriculture, export etc. Every citizen can't be expert of the constitution of his country. Therefore, if any kind of question or difficulty regarding any of the above matter arises people consult an expert advocate or solicitor in that matter. If people undertake to do anything without consulting such experts or without any legal attestation it could be considered as illegal action on their part. Similarly, in scriptures different kinds of dos and don'ts are narrated keeping in view different types of nature & interest of human beings. A layman cannot decide which of the innumerable dos and don'ts of scriptures are for which men. So, except consulting some religious preacher there remains no way to come to the decision regarding one's course of action. Hence, in scriptures showing the indispensability of Sampradaya it is stated that any action that is done without entering into the Sampradaya meets with failure.

[3]*Adikshitasya va moru, Krtam sarvam anarthakam*
Pashu-yonim-avapnoti diksha-hino naro mrtah.

Meaning:All that is done by a person who does not take initiation is as good as undone. He does obtain the birth of a beast, without initiation he is no better than a deadman.

Thus, we have seen in all ways what Sampradaya is. One who adopts the course of Sampradaya by understanding well the philosophical instruction, the doctrinal instruction and practical instruction is excellent. One who adopts the course of Sampradaya by knowing only the doctrinal instruction and practical instruction is the medium type. But one who adopts means by obtaining only practical instruction is likely to go astray. Such a seeker is called heinous and lowly type. But a man who is void of the knowledge of Practical instruction is worth no consideration.

Notes:

1.

One's own Dharma even not practiced well,
is better that well-practiced Dharma of others,
Death while following one's own Dharma is the best,
but to follow Dharma of others is dangerous.

2.

The philosophy of Shri Vallabhacarya is known by the name of "Shuddhadvaita' whereas the religious course that SriVallabhacarya has prescribed is known by the names of "Pushti-Bhakti-Marga' or "Pushti-Marga'.

3.

What one who is not initiated does

goes all as undone and obtains the birth of a beast and be then as good as dead.

Book for further reading:

Sat-sidhanta-martanda by Shri Gattulalaji.

Pushti-Bhakti-Marga

In this universe Bhagavan has made some beings having the nature of Pushti. As Bhagavan has created all beings with specific purpose, Pushti-beings are created particularly for performing the worship of Shri Krishna. But, because of their separation from Bhagavan Pushti-beings had been attached to worldly matters like other Pravahi beings and forgotten their duty to perform worship. Just as in holidays students give themselves much to sport and games, and forget their schools and books.

With the impart of Kali-age, true Dharma was covered up as a number of fraud and hypocritical beliefs sprung up in the name of Vedic scriptures. People became partakers of sin by practicing forbidden and irreligious things against Vedas. People were giving up their religion by force as they were terrorized by cruel Muslim rulers. How could simple and straightforward people follow Dharma in that situation! How they could get the knowledge of their Dharma! Seeing such helpless condition of the people some learned and prestigious but greedy Brahmanas started exploiting Dharma for the political & monetary benefit. For this reason Dharma got perverted to such an extent that people ceased to understand what Dharma was and what Adharma was. As a helpless man becomes impatient, intolerant and greedy, the ignorant people began to do deeds for wealth and prestige under the temptation to earn more with a little labour. Moreover, Dharma which is considered as a way of living life and devotion in the culture of Bharat, ceased to be so and became the means of public exhibition, prestige for title and means to obtain wealth.

At the end, Brahmanas, too, lost the knowledge of Dharma and made God's worship the source and business to earn their livelihood through the medium of temples and under the pretext of Dharma. Infatuated by the perishable worldly fruits obtainable by the worship of gods and goddesses, people forgot pure and desireless Pushti devotion of the Supreme Brahma Shri Krishna. Again, the true meaning of the scripture like Shri Bhagavat in which Pushti-Devotion is narrated, remained hidden because of the popularity of arbitrary interpretations. If there is nobody to save the man being carried away in the current of a river, he has to be dragged helplessly. In the current of the age of Kali Pushti-beings too began to be dragged.

Bhagava^Vn saw that the life of beings whom he had created for performing His worship was wasted away. So He ordained Shri Vallabhacharya to manifest the Marga of His worship and to uplift Pushti beings who were drown away in the flow of the time. The path of Devotion and Resort of Shri Krishna, which Shri Vallabhacharya proclaimed, is known as 'Pushti-Bhakti-Marga' the devotional path of Pushti.

If the devotee desires to obtain the worldly and otherworldly fruit or liberation, such devotion is not called 'Pushti-Devotion'. Hence, devotional path of Pushti is to be defined as "the path in which Shri Krshna's devotion is obtained and performed through the grace of Shri Krshna without any desire". One can have very good understanding of Pushti-Devotion from the character of Bula Mishra, the disciple of Shri Vallabhacharya.

Bula Mishra has born in a Brahmana family. Once his father reprimanded him for being devoted to pleasure-loving life. So he felt a longing to attain learning. He worked very hard but did not succeed. At the end he thought that everything happens according to the will of Bhagavan. So

he began to recite Vishnu! Vishnu! Vishnu! in order to please Bhagavan. He abandoned taking food and water. Bhagavan was pleased and manifested in front of Bula Mishra. He commanded him to go to Shri Vallabhacharya. Thus Bula came in to contact with Shri Vallabhacharya. "You are blessed, Bula!" Shri Vallabhacharya said, "You have had Bhagavan's appearance in this very life". Bula Mishra requested "Gracious lord! It is your grace that I beheld Bhagavan, but I am still void of the bliss of Bhagavan i.e.Bajan-ananda. I can obtain it only when you grace me". In order to test him Shri Vallabhacharya tried to avoid it "Now what more have you to do? You have had the very look of Bhagavan!" Hearing this Bula Mishra entreated, "I want no liberation, but I want devotion. It's only for this reason that I have come to your refuge".

For having looks of Bhagavan many disciples of the Pushti cult keep wondering in temples and by having look of Bhagavan once a day, they feel the satisfaction of doing all their duties. But such looks-seekers are not fit for entering into Pushti-Marga. The very purpose of Shri Vallabhacharya's manifestation is to turn Pushti-beings to the worship and resort of Bhagavan at their home. There were innumerable Shri Krshna temples throughout India before Shri Vallabhacharya for those Darshana-seekers who were satisfied only with the looks of Bhagavan once a day. Again, Bhagavan has manifested Pushti-Beings only for performing His worship. Hence, those who are Pushti-beings must be interested in the worship of Bhagavan. How such a Pushti-beings can have satisfaction only with the Darshana? Those who feel satisfaction only with the Darshana can never be Pushti-beings. How can those who are not Pushti beings be allowed to enter into Pushti-Marga? With this thought in mind Shri Vallabhacharya first tried to avoid Bula Mishra and said: "You have already had Darshana of Bhagavan. What more have you to do now?" But Bula Mishra was a true Pushti-being. What satisfaction he could have only with Darshana? Eventhough he might have had divine appearance of Bhagava^Vn, the first and foremost duty of the Pushti-being is to perform the worship of Bhagavan with devout sentiment of surrendering everything to Bhagavan. If he doesn't perform the worship, his very existence goes in vain. Hence, Bula Mishra said:"It is your grace that I have beheld Bhagavan but what I want is devotion of Bhagavan. Hence, I have come to your refuge",

Thus, the devotional path of Pushti is the Path of worship and devotion of Bhagavan. In this path the worship of Shri Krishna is the means, and the fruit to be obtained through it is also the worship of Shri Krishna.

Book for further reading:
84Vaishnava Varata by Shri Gokulanathaji